Contents

Executive Summary 3
Introduction 4
Rationale 5
Structure of Year 3 6
Participation 9
Summary of Year 3 11
ComRes Polling 12
Next steps for Year 4 18
References 19
Executive Summary

ParkLives is a community programme that promotes healthier, happier, and more active communities through a partnership between Coca-Cola GB and local authorities. ParkLives organises and facilitates physical activity sessions in local parks suitable for all abilities and ages with no fees or memberships required. Physical inactivity has become a significant issue in public health, in large part due to the association between a sedentary (inactive) lifestyle and an increased incidence of cardiovascular disease, some cancers and psychological disorders.

Organisation

Year 3 of ParkLives saw expansion of the programme, with four new local authorities becoming involved. Additionally, ParkLives launched a new partnership with StreetGames. Experimental events were also used to both deliver small scale ParkLives events, and raise awareness of the main ParkLives programme. A total of 10,498 activities were organised in Year 3 (excluding StreetGames and experiential events). The most frequently offered activities were fun & games, walking, mind & body, and general fitness sessions. Via the online registration process 78% of individuals reported being physically inactive (exercising less than one day per week), indicating that ParkLives successfully reached sections of the physically inactive population. 15% of individuals reported having a disability; Asian, mixed-race and ‘other’ ethnicities were over-represented compared to the UK population, black ethnicities were proportionally represented and white ethnicities were under-represented.

Participation

Across the UK, a total of 104,905 unique participants took part in ParkLives sessions in Year 3 (a 91% increase on Year 2), totalling 259,079 participation instances (a 37% increase on Year 2; Figure 4). This brings the ParkLives overall figures (across all three years) to a total of 194,237 unique participants and 417,534 participation instances. Alongside this, ParkLives helped inspire up to 119,003 unique participants and 417,534 participation instances. The most frequently attended activities were fun & games, walking, mind & body, and general fitness sessions. Fun & games and special events were the most attended activities across Year 3, with 26% of participation instances occurring at each of these event types. These were also the two activities that attracted the highest proportions of participants to attend their first ParkLives session; 39% of individuals’ first ParkLives attendance was at fun & games events. Fun & game events included a variety of activities, ranging from Quidditch and treasure hunts, to volleyball and family games.

Awareness

Awareness of community groups or participation schemes in local parks increased by 2% from June to September 2016, with higher than average increases reported by young people (5% increase), young mums (7% increase) and inactive individuals (3% increase). ParkLives encouraged 2% of the surveyed sample to participate in more physical activity, and was particularly successful in encouraging physical activity participation – most specifically in its target populations of young people (4%), young mums (4%), and low-income individuals (3%). Indeed, across the overall sample, the percentage of individuals reporting social participation in physical activities in local parks increased from June (73%) to September (75%), and physical inactivity fell by 1%, with most notable decreases in the percentage of inactive young people (27% to 14%) and young mums (19% to 15%).

Qualitative insight

Polling, conducted by MediaCom, was used to provide a more in-depth qualitative understanding of the motivations, barriers and awareness of ParkLives. Short interviews with parents and activity leaders, in addition to an online survey deployed to participants, was used to gather this information.

Overall, 15% were aware of ParkLives, reporting that the most prominent methods of advertising were outdoor posters (35%) and social media (34%). Of social media, Facebook was a prominently used platform. The activities with the highest awareness were fun & games (52%), walking (45%), and ParkFit (42%), in line with perceptions that ParkLives provides opportunities for families to have fun and bond. In fact, the top 4 reasons for taking part in ParkLives were that it was free (17%), that families can attend together (15%), that it offers a chance to be active in green space (10%), and it helps support local families (8%). Regarding the last of these, ParkLives appears to be seen as a social and inclusive project which benefits the community. 75% of individuals saw it as a great method to support the community, as well as unite it (72%). Additionally, it was reported as a way to help people (e.g. young mums) socialise. Of those aware of ParkLives, 58% knew Coca-Cola Great Britain supported ParkLives, while 29% thought it was supported by their local authority. Over 80% agreed that Coca-Cola Great Britain are investing in communities and encouraging families to be active through the ParkLives programme.

Next steps for Year 4

A bespoke electronic system designed by Kinetic Insight was piloted in Birmingham to record session participation across Year 3. In Year 4, this ‘tap’ system will also be used to measure health and wellbeing-related variables and will be used across further local authorities: Dundee, Glasgow, Newcastle and Manchester. Upon tap, the tablet will be set to ask a single item question related to participant health and wellbeing. Collection of this data over a number of time-points will enable analyses of changes over time. This insight will support local authorities in providing activities that may be of greatest benefit to local populations.
Introduction

The aim of ParkLives is to support people to make positive changes in their lives through fun and free activities in parks and green spaces. ParkLives organises and facilitates physical activity sessions in local parks, utilising the marketing expertise of Coca-Cola Great Britain in relation to physical activity promotion, on a scale that is beyond the means of local authorities alone. The range of activities is broad and is designed to be suitable for all abilities and ages, with no fees or memberships associated with participation.

This Year 3 Report communicates data collected during the third year of ParkLives delivery (January 2016 – December 2016), as well as total figures representative of the entirety of ParkLives to date. The purpose of this report is to present:

- ParkLives events and sessions, participation figures and demographic information
- Recorded data about awareness of, and motivations and barriers to participation in ParkLives activities
- Comparisons, where appropriate, to previously reported figures and findings
- Analyses of wellbeing-, physical activity-, and social identity–related data collected from ParkLives participants
- Learning and recommendations for future delivery
Rationale

Physical activity and health
Physical inactivity has become an important and highly significant issue in public health (1), in large part due to the association between a sedentary (inactive) lifestyle and an increased incidence of cardiovascular disease, some cancers and psychological disorders. Insufficient physical activity is among the ten most important risk factors for the health burden in England, with physical inactivity costing the NHS in England more than £450m a year (2).

Parks and green exercise
Green spaces such as parks, afford, or invite physical activity; the two are frequently reported to be positively associated (6). Over eight million adults per week engage in green exercise (physical activity in nature or green spaces; 7, 8) in England alone (9). Green exercise is estimated to provide health benefits of £2.2 billion a year to the English adult population, helping to lower BMI and decrease levels of obesity (9).

In addition to parks naturally promoting physical activity behaviour, research indicates that the health and wellbeing benefits of physical activity can be enhanced by environmental settings. To a significantly greater extent than equivalent exercise performed indoors or in ‘built’ urban environments, green exercise has been shown to reduce mental fatigue, reduce stress, improve mood and self-esteem, and promote both social interaction during exercise and restorative night-time sleep following exercise (10–12). Indeed, characteristics of nature-based outdoor environments offer ‘affordances’ (behavioural opportunities) for physical activity, social interactions, and individual–environment interactions – which all function to enhance human health and wellbeing (8, 13–18).

Lack of participation in social activities contributes to social isolation in many individuals (19, 20). Green spaces, and the social events that they play host to, can facilitate an increased sense of community, by increasing feelings of emotional attachment and social identity, and in turn enhancing individuals’ sense of social support and reduced feelings of loneliness (21). This is important both in its own right and as loneliness is an established risk factor for both physical and mental illness (22–24).

Enhancing wellbeing via each of New Economics Foundation’s ‘five ways to wellbeing’ (25), green exercise participation facilitates individuals in:

» Being more active by taking part in exercise and activities in natural environments, gaining physical and mental health benefits
» Being connected both with nature and with other people, thus increasing social inclusion
» Taking notice of nature and the green environment around them, and gaining the associated mental health benefits and increased connectedness to nature
» Keep learning, by developing new skills and learning about themselves
» Being able to give, through sharing and supporting each other, and working as a team

Public sector cuts and their impact on parks
We are currently undergoing unprecedented cuts to public services. Pressures on resources will result in the reduction of local authority public health budgets by £331 million (9.7 per cent of the total budget) between 2015 and 2021 (26), and parks have been hit the hardest. A report by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has shown that 92% of park managers report cuts to their revenue budgets over the past three years (27). Financial pressures will force local councils to divert money from local services, such as parks and leisure budgets. According the HLF’s ‘State of UK Public Parks’ these cuts are disproportionally higher in comparison to other service areas. This is having a major impact on the state of our parks as a safe community space for social activity, with only 53% of parks reported to be in good condition (27). While the UK Government (28) decided to examine the impact of reduced local authority budgets on these open spaces, presently there has been no decision to support parks.

Considering their social and health benefits, the value of parks is clear. In today’s climate of a physical inactivity epidemic that is critically overburdening the NHS, and severe financial threat to local parks across the UK, ParkLives affords individuals and communities the opportunity to develop a range of health and wellbeing enhancements, demonstrating the importance as to why high quality parks should remain accessible to the public.
Structure of Year 3

Year 3 of ParkLives saw expansion of the programme, with four new local authorities becoming involved. Additionally, ParkLives launched a new partnership with StreetGames, through which sixteen weeks of free and fun ParkLives sessions were administered across 34 locations.

In total in Year 3, ParkLives activities were run across the local authorities of Birmingham, Newcastle, London Borough of Newham, Nottingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Stoke-on-Trent (new authority), Swansea (new authority), Southampton (new authority) and Dundee (new authority). These new local authorities were selected because of their proposed programmes to bring ParkLives to local communities in need of further support around their health and wellbeing. All new local authorities bring new local partnerships and new activities. Dundee brings ParkLives to a second core city in Scotland; Swansea becomes the first core city in Wales; Southampton the first on the south coast of England and Stoke-on-Trent used its designation as European City of Sport 2016 to introduce ParkLives to its communities.

Communications, campaigns and promotion
As with Years 1 and 2, a poster campaign was run to advertise ParkLives. This included placing posters in bus shelters and telephone kiosks in the areas surrounding parks where ParkLives sessions were held.

New for Year 3, two videos were commercially produced and circulated via social media and other internet websites (e.g. YouTube). The videos told the stories of ParkLives participants Richard and Sue, and were designed to encourage and attract typically ‘hard to reach’ populations to ParkLives’ friendly and welcoming events, for their social and physical benefits. These videos can be viewed here (1) and here (2).

As in previous years, social media played a key role in driving awareness and interest in ParkLives. ParkLives posts to Twitter, Facebook and now LinkedIn, enabling the programme to reach new audiences. In 2016 new content strategies were explored, such as posting polls and applying multimedia content like GIFs to interact creatively with various audiences. Across all social media platforms there were 86.6 million impressions for 2016, a 54% increase from 2015. Impressions where most likely made during the summer months of June and July, indicating these are key times to engage audiences. For StreetGames, 19 million impressions were made over 2016 across the 13 participating areas. The highest number of impressions where made in Oswestry and Southend (295k; 281k respectively), during June.

Twitter was the most effective engagement source (61%), and resulted in the most ParkLives related posts (53%). However, Facebook was best for creating impressions (82%), in comparison to Twitter (16%) and LinkedIn (2%). Overall, use of articles and video content were the most effective methods of generating these impressions, while polls best aided engagement. Polling was also a great way of measuring which activities were most discussed; over 2016 walking, tai chi and tennis were the most popular and regularly tweeted activities.

ParkLives’ Twitter accounts were run by each local authority, with a total of 10.3 k tweets in 2016, a 11% increase from 2015. Birmingham remained the top account year-on-year, posting 1.2k tweets and generating 3.1 million potential impressions. This was followed by Newcastle (6 million) and then Newham (5 million), with Dundee and Southampton generating the fewest at a still creditable 0.5 million. LinkedIn was a new social media branch in 2016, resulting in a significant 44k users reached. As use of this media continues to grow, this will boost engagements and awareness of ParkLives on another platform.

Session leaders
Session leaders remain a key asset to engaging and retaining participants and encourage them to bring friends and family to future activities. Since they act as an inspirational activity figurehead for the local area and people, they are recruited locally by each authority throughout the project.

“The best thing about working for ParkLives is the positive feedback from people attending my yoga sessions who are suffering from loss, depression and pain etc. Many have spoken about the benefits and in most cases have been relieved of symptoms...”

Amma, Session Leader
In total, 362 people registered to be ParkLives session leaders in Year 3, an increase of 96 leaders from Year 2. All leaders were given an introduction to ParkLives and went through a short training programme (approximately two hours) provided by Coca-Cola Great Britain and ukactive. Whilst most session leaders had already provided local services in the form of delivering group exercise in gyms and leisure centres, for some, the launch of ParkLives was their first time delivering outdoor activity sessions. Due to their important role as motivator session leaders were given freedom to personalise their activity sessions and use their own unique approaches to best suit the attendees. As such, session leaders encouraged participants to feel comfortable and welcome in the environment. This is an important aspect of the ParkLives experience that can promote newcomers’ development of social cohesion, wellbeing and continued activity participation. In Year 3, session leaders were among those who helped increase the awareness of the ParkLives programme through Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn (see Communications, campaigns and promotion, pg. 6).

**Session leader testimonials**

“The best thing about working for Parklives is the positive feedback from people attending my yoga sessions who are suffering from loss, depression and pain etc. Many have spoken about the benefits and in most cases have been relieved of symptoms.” – Amma, Session Leader

“The great thing about my second year with ParkLives is that people are returning to my Yoga classes who attended last year. This is encouraging to the new attenders who are receiving positive feedback from the originals about how much they have benefited from their ParkLives experience.” – Amma, Session Leader

“Parklives brings together people from all walks of life...” – Amma, Session Leader

“It’s great to be a part of a programme like ParkLives and getting local residents to use their park...” – Gino, Session Leader

“We were extremely pleased to see some families returning weekly for the sessions we ran. Seeing them come together and try activities that they have never tried before.” – Jamie, Session Leader

**Events**

The activities offered in Year 3 were selected by local authorities in line with their existing knowledge and shared learning, including that from the Year 2 report, of which event types have historically proven popular and met the desires of local communities. Year 3 also saw the incorporation of events run by StreetGames, which target young people and disadvantaged communities. As disadvantaged young people take part in sport far less, and are less likely to take part in organised sport than their more affluent peers (29), this incorporation of StreetGames bolstered the efficacy of ParkLives in reducing financial, accessibility and social barriers to physical activity participation.

Experiential events were also used to both deliver small-versions of ParkLives sessions, and raise awareness of the main ParkLives programme. The experiential events brought the ParkLives experience to high footfall locations (such as high streets), with small pop-up experiences and distribution of flyers and timetables for the main ParkLives programme. The experiential events were delivered by a third party, Haygarth, who hired residents to deliver the events.
**Number of events and activities organised**

A total of 10,498 activities were organised in Year 3 (not including StreetGames and experiential events). StreetGames hosted 56 activities (see Figure 1) between July and December 2016, leading a total of 1,585 sessions with up to 5,252 participants. Activities took place in 217 parks (Table 1), across 32 locations, in 11 regions throughout the country, including the North and South West of England, East Midlands, Yorkshire & Humber, Wales and Scotland. The most frequently offered activities were fun & games (e.g. treasure hunts, family park games), walking, mind & body, and general fitness sessions (see Figure 1).

### Table 1. Number of parks by ParkLives local authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Number of Parks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newham</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoke</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dundee</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>217</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1. Number of activities by activity type across ParkLives Year 3**
**Participation**

**Registrations**
13,272 individuals registered with ParkLives via online platforms in Year 3. The ParkLives website received the majority of the registrations with 20% registering via their Facebook profiles and 79% registering via local authority. One in five registered individuals (21%) logged in at least once following registration.

**Demographics**
Demographic information was recorded via the online registration process.

Upon registration, 78% (10,367 of 13,271) of individuals reported being physically inactive (exercising less than 30 minutes one day per week), indicating that ParkLives successfully reached members of the physically inactive population.

1.5% of registered individuals reported having a disability. Asian, mixed-race and ‘other’ ethnicities were over-represented compared to the UK population, black ethnicities were proportionally represented and white ethnicities were under-represented. This demonstrates that ParkLives successfully reached black and ethnic minorities (Table 2). Comparatively, parkrun more predominantly reaches white ethnicities (96%; 30).

**Participation levels**
Across the UK, a total of 104,905 unique participants took part in ParkLives sessions in Year 3 (a 91% increase on Year 2; Figure 2), totalling 259,079 participation instances (a 37% increase on Year 2; Figure 2). This brings the ParkLives overall figures (across all three years) to a total of 194,237 unique participants and 417,534 participation instances.

Fun & games and special events were the most attended activities across Year 3, with 26% of participation instances occurring at each of these event types respectively (Figure 3). These were also the two activities that attracted the highest proportions of participants to attend their first ParkLives sessions; 39% of individuals’ first ParkLives attendance was at fun & games events (Figure 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>% UK*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3,120</td>
<td>83.5%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed race</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Ethnicities and age demographics of ParkLives online registration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>% UK*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 – 18</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 – 30</td>
<td>2939</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 50</td>
<td>8498</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51+</td>
<td>1702</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*2011 Census
Figure 3. Percentage of total participation instances by activity type

Figure 4. Percentage of initial participation instances by activity type
Summary of Year 3

Coca-Cola Great Britain

10 Local Authorities:
- Birmingham
- Newcastle
- Nottingham
- Manchester
- Glasgow
- Stoke-on-Trent
- Swansea
- Southampton
- Dundee

Promotional campaigns:
- social media;
- local authorities;
- targeted online video;
- outdoor posters on bus sides and telephone kiosks;
- experiential events;
- local PR

362 session leaders

10,498 free sessions
- Fun & games: 1,817
- Walking: 1,334
- Mind and body: 1,301
- Fitness: 851
- Dance: 641
- Ball games: 637
- Multi-sports: 637
- Other: 3,280

2% awareness of ParkLives
within general population in
target areas

- 5% young people
- 4% young mums
- 1% of physically inactive

86.6 million impressions
in 2016 across social media

ParkLives encouraged 2% of
general population to become
more active

- 4% of young people & young mums / 3% of low-income

Health and wellbeing changes
to be evidenced in Year 4

104,905
unique participants

259,079
total participation instances

119,003
individuals were inspired to be active

Demographics
- 78% inactive at registration
- 3.4% Black, 7.8% Asian, 3%
  Mixed-race
- 64% aged 31–50 years
ComRes polling
Public awareness, behaviours, motivators and barriers

Sporting Future, the UK government’s strategy for sport and physical activity, highlights that raising awareness is key to eliciting positive behaviour change and that an appropriate mix of marketing methods should be used to engage different populations (30). It has been proposed that in order to increase physical activity levels at a population level, and to reduce the barriers to physical activity, policymakers should focus intervention strategies on increasing the awareness of specific aspects of physical activity (31).

A survey was conducted to gauge possible impacts of ParkLives. In line with the start and end of the summer ParkLives season, the survey was conducted in both June (n= 2,992) and September 2016 (n= 2,983). The sample comprised of adults (aged 16+ years) living in or near to the ParkLives target cities of London, Birmingham, Nottingham, Glasgow, Newcastle, Manchester, Dundee, Southampton, Stoke–on–Trent and Swansea; and was weighted to be nationally representative of all UK adults by age, gender, region and socio–economic grade.

Survey respondents were categorised in line with four pre–determined target populations for the ParkLives programme: young people (individuals aged 20 – 30 years); young mums (mothers aged 20 – 40 years); low–income individuals (social grade ‘DE’; semi–skilled % unskilled manual occupations, unemployed and lowest grade occupations); and physically inactive individuals (individuals reporting that in the past week they had on zero days completed 30–minutes plus of physical activity). Individuals could be considered under more than one classification.

Awareness
Although in September 2016 three quarters of UK adults (75%) were not aware of any community groups or participation schemes in their local parks, this was a 2% increase in awareness compared to June, with specific increases in the awareness of young people (5% increase), young mums (7% increase) and inactive individuals (3% increase) over this time. Of particular note, in September 2016, approximately one quarter of 16–17 year olds (24%) said they are aware of at least one community group or participation scheme, a higher proportion than for any other age group.

In June and September 2016, 2% of UK adults surveyed stated they were aware of ParkLives. This is slightly lower than awareness of other national–level physical activity campaigns such as This Girl Can (6% in both June and September) which were extensively advertised. However, awareness is the same as the National Institute on Ageing campaign Go4Life (2% in 2016). Young people (5% in both June and September) and young mums (4% in both June and September) were more aware of ParkLives than the overall UK sample, demonstrating that awareness campaigns have successfully reached these intended audiences. However, inactive individuals were less aware of ParkLives than the overall sample (1% were aware in each of June and September 2016; Figure 5).

Figure 5. Percentage of September 2016 survey respondents aware of physical activity campaigns

---

12 www.researchinstitute.ukactive.com ParkLives Year 3 Evaluation | September 2017
ParkLives-inspired physical activity behaviour
ParkLives encouraged between 2–5% of the surveyed sample within the 10 core cities to participate in more physical activity, implying that an estimated 119,003 people over the age of 16 were inspired by the programme to be more active. Compared to the overall sample, ParkLives has been successful in encouraging physical activity participation most specifically in its target populations of young people (4%), young mums (4%), and low-income individuals (3%). In September 2016, of the cities surveyed, respondents in Swansea and Birmingham were the most likely to say that ParkLives encouraged them to do more physical activity. The impact of ParkLives in encouraging physical activity participation is shown in relation to other UK campaigns, in Figure 6.

Figure 6. Percentage of sample reporting being encouraged by campaigns to do more physical activity in the past year

Overall physical activity levels
From June to September 2016, for the sample overall, reported physical inactivity fell by 1%. There was a notable decrease in the percentage of inactive young people (27% to 14%) and young mums (19% to 15%). Conversely, the low-income sub-sample reported lower levels of physical activity in September than in June (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Physical activity levels by subgroup and time-point

Adults in Glasgow were most likely to report being inactive in September (38%), which was an 11% increase from June representing the largest shift in activity levels in any city over that time frame. The lowest level of inactivity was reported for Stoke-on-Trent (18%), which followed a reduction of 4% from June to September.
Physical activity participation in parks/open spaces
There was a decrease by 5% from June (30%) to September (25%) in the proportion of young people who say they regularly use parks and open spaces to keep active. This number may be associated with the cuts made to local parks and green spaces, which reduces their accessibility and quality for the public (9). Nonetheless, the parks remain a useful area for taking part in physical activity. For example, the percentage of young mums who reported never using their local parks and open spaces for physical activity (ten minutes or more) fell from 13% in June to 10% in September, with a similar pattern seen for young people (Figure 8).

Across the UK overall, there was an increase in the percentage of individuals reporting social participation in physical activities in local parks (i.e. with friends, family, neighbours or other members of the local community), from June (73%) to September (75%). The largest increase was in Nottingham, rising from 64% to 78% from June to September. Glasgow saw a decrease in this measure from 86% to 70%. Young mums (88% in September) and young people (82% in September) were more likely than UK adults to say they have used a local park in the last year for one or more social physical activity. Older adults are less likely than younger adults to say they use parks for each type of activity tested, with the exception of conservation activities (13% of those aged 65+ used parks for this).

There was little change in the popularity of specific activities, with walking demonstrating the largest change and remaining the most popular activity from June (54% of the sample reported participating in the last year) to September (56%). Walking was the most popular activity across all subgroups of interest (Figure 9).

Figure 8. Frequency of physical activity in parks and open spaces for ten-minutes or more by subgroup

![Bar chart showing frequency of physical activity in parks and open spaces for ten-minutes or more by subgroup.]

Figure 9. Percentage of overall UK sample reporting social physical activity participation by activity and time-point

![Bar chart showing percentage of overall UK sample reporting social physical activity participation by activity and time-point.]

www.researchinstitute.ukactive.com
ParkLives Year 3 Evaluation | September 2017
Physical activity partners
For the activities most popularly participated in socially, the person(s) with whom the survey respondents participated with are illustrated by Figure 10.

The most extreme percentage increase from June to September was for working out with friends, which increased by 8%. Adversely, the most extreme percentage decrease from June to September was for cycling with spouses or partners, which decreased by 9%.

Figure 10. Percentage of sample reporting social participation in physical activities by social partner and time-point
Motivations and barriers
Between the end of August and mid-September 2016 additional polling was conducted by MediaCom as a form of qualitative research. This was to understand in more detail the awareness of motivations and barriers to ParkLives. This involved conducting short interviews with parents (n=10), activity leaders (n=5), and a passer-by (n=1). A supplementary online survey was conducted with participants (n=455) in locations near to ParkLives delivery.

Awareness
A total of 15% were both aware of ParkLives and have participated in at least one session, with an additional 24% being aware of ParkLives even though they had not taken part. Of those who are aware of ParkLives and attended, 9 out of 10 (91%) were likely to attend a future session and take their children. Regarding the latter, this falls to 8 out of 10 people (81%) if they are aware but are yet to attend a session. Lastly, just over two thirds of respondents had not heard of ParkLives but would be interested in taking part in the future.

Of those that were aware of ParkLives, the two most prominent methods of awareness reported were through billboards or outdoor posters (35%), and social media (34%) which has increased over the last 2 years (from 16% and 12% respectively). Of those reporting awareness through social media, 18% recall seeing social advertisement on Facebook, indicating that this remains a strong social media platform.

Perceptions
In 2016, respondents believed that ParkLives was aimed at families (78%), parents with young children (59%), and children under 12 years of age (52%). In 2014, the top response was teenagers (76%), indicating that ParkLives target population has changed, expanding to include a wider population of individuals.

Parents with children aged 0 -18 indicated that they associated playing outdoor games and sports with the opportunity to have fun (60%) and spend quality time with family (54%). These perceptions are mirrored in the top 4 reasons for taking part in ParkLives: 1) ParkLives being free to join (17%); 2) families can attend together (15%); 3) it is a chance to be active in green space (10%); 4) supporting local families (8%).

These perceptions further mirror which activities receive the highest awareness – fun & games (52%). Following this, walking (45%) and ParkFit (42%) were the second and
third. These activities exemplify ParkLives as an informal, sociable, and inclusive project that provides local residents with the opportunity to be active in outdoor, green spaces with ease.

Of those interviewed, the mums also appreciated that ParkLives runs throughout the summer and helps alleviate the stress of planning things to do for the children during the 6–week holiday period. Furthermore, they praised the variety of activities on offer and having the opportunity to spend time outside with their family. A total of 86% of mums surveyed said they find ParkLives a great way to meet new people and socialise. For dads, the findings were similar (80%), however it should be noted that the sample size remains lower for this group in comparison to mums.

Community
ParkLives is seen as a great way of supporting the local community (75%) and also uniting the community (72%). As 86% of mums surveyed said they find ParkLives a great way to meet new people and socialise, this also suggests that ParkLives is associated to changes in perceptions of social and community cohesion. A key example below highlights the wider benefits ParkLives is having on the local community.

“What’s really good about ParkLives is the different people that we get here. I mean, I haven’t been able to speak to everybody because we don’t speak the same language, but we’ve found ways around it. We’ve learnt stuff here, we’ve learnt more than just about sport here.”
Mum in Newham

Coca-Cola Great Britain
Of those aware of ParkLives, Coca-Cola Great Britain (CCGB) is seen by 58% as supporting ParkLives, with 29% suggesting it is the local authority. Additionally, 53% of those who are aware of and participated in ParkLives, were also aware that CCGB has committed £20 million by 2020 to invest in community initiatives. As such 82% agreed that CCGB are investing in communities through the ParkLives programme. Of those aware, over 80% believed CCGB are also encouraging families to be active.

ParkLives is helping to ensure there are positive corporate
Next steps for Year 4

Although ParkLives will not move into any new core cities in year four of the programme, there have been some new StreetGames locations. The aim for year four is to build on the success of the previous years, now that each of the delivery partners has at least one year of delivering ParkLives. This will be built through new local partnerships, new activities and developing better relationships with local communities and stakeholders. A participation target of 125,000 uniques has been set for year four (2017), with the aim for it to be the biggest and best yet.

Evidencing change

As outlined in the Year 2 report, a bespoke electronic system designed by Kinetic Insight was piloted in Birmingham in order to record event participation across Year 3. The Kinetic Insight Pro Tablet Application utilises Near Field Communication (NFC) technology to facilitate the registration process for registered members of Kinetic Insight at any local authority delivered physical activity session. The use of NFC technology ensures that the registration process is extremely quick, yet very simple for any member to follow regardless of their age or technical ability. Individuals are able to register with Kinetic Insight via paper registration form that is manually entered into an online web portal, or alternatively by completing the registration process via the tablet application during a session. Upon successful registration, every member is sent a welcome pack that contains a welcome letter, an NFC membership card and an NFC key fob. Users ‘tap’ their card or fob against a tablet device in order to register their attendance at a given event.

In Year 4, this ‘tap’ system will also be used to measure health and wellbeing-related variables and it will be rolled out in Dundee, Glasgow, Newcastle and Manchester. Upon tap, the tablet will be set to ask a single item ONS question related to participant health and wellbeing, selected for this specific local authority. Collection of this data over a number of time-points enables analysis of change over time. As such, the data collected will relate directly to outcomes specified in Sport England’s strategy ‘Towards an Active Nation’ and will both measure change across the sample, and allow comparison to the national average ONS score to showcase any improvements that have been made. It will further enable insight into which types of activities are associated with greatest improvements in specific measures of interest, and in which demographics particular impacts are most pronounced. Such insight will assist in local authorities’ decision making around which activities to offer in order to provide the greatest benefit to local populations.
References


